

The South Florida Water Management District LOCAL GOVERNMENT NEWS



April 2010

In Your Region

Staff at the South Florida Water Management District's Okeechobee Service Center are participating in community events to promote water conservation for Water Conservation Month, celebrated annually in April.

In addition to receiving Water Conservation Month proclamations from all local governments in Glades, Highlands and Okeechobee counties, staff provided literature and water-saving devices including shower timers and faucet aerators at a number of local events including the Okeechobee County Fair, East Coast Migrant Family Information Night, 5th Annual Rotary Club Lake Okeechobee Bike Ride and the YMCA Family Fun day held recently in downtown Okeechobee.

Bicycle riders at the annual Rotary Club ride on the Herbert Hoover Dike received packets of information and were escorted by Service Center Director Gary Ritter who supplied water, opened gates and kept a tool kit and first aid kit on hand should any of the participants need assistance. Children attending the YMCA Family Fun Day had an opportunity to decorate their own fish and to learn about the importance of having enough, good quality water for the environment.

Upcoming events this month include career fairs at Indian River State College and at Okeechobee High School. Publications are available in both English and Spanish languages. For more information about any of these events or to invite us to yours, please contact us at (863) 462-5260.



Jerry Montgomery
Governing Board
Vice-Chair



Joe Collins
Governing Board
Member



Gary Ritter
Okeechobee
Service Center
Director



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**5th Annual Rotary Club
Lake Okeechobee Bike Ride**



YMCA Family Fun Day

Okeechobee Service Center Staff Hosts Local & International Students



In February and March, undergraduate and graduate students from two London Universities—Royal Holloway, University of London and Queen's University of London—traveled to Florida to learn about its ecosystems and the District's roles, challenges and restoration efforts. Both groups met at the service center and Gary Ritter provided an overview presentation. Afterward, the groups toured a variety of projects in the Lake Okeechobee watershed.

Also in March, Okeechobee Service Center staff guided two groups of high school sophomores from the Jupiter Environmental Research and Field Studies Academy to the Taylor Creek Stormwater Treatment Area (STA), the Lemkin Creek facility and Lake Okeechobee. The Academy at Jupiter Community High School is a four-year magnet school program designed to meet the needs of students who wish to pursue an academic curriculum with emphasis on environmental studies.

Lakeside construction project and nature coexist peacefully

Construction of the Lakeside Ranch STA has been under way for several months. Straddling the boundary between Martin and Okeechobee counties, the project site is home for many species of wildlife. Majestic bald eagles—a species protected by Federal law—have nested on the property and are producing offspring. On March 11, one bald eagle chick fell from its nest and was soon discovered by contractors working at the Lakeside Ranch construction site. The young eagle was not quite old enough to fly and was unable to get back in the nest. With assistance from the Treasure Coast Wildlife Hospital in Palm City, the eagle was returned to its nest on March 16.



**Lisa Kreiger, SFWMD,
with the eaglet.**



**The eaglet safely back
in the nest tree.**

Waiting for Your Invitation

The Okeechobee Service Center staff members are available to meet with groups about water resources and environmental restoration projects in our area.

Technical experts, scientists and other specialists can tailor a presentation to meet specific needs or answer questions regarding many water-related topics.

This service is free and available by contacting Suzanne Trimble at (863)462-5260, ext. 3019, or by email at strimble@sfwmd.gov

Out and About

- **Water Resources Advisory Commission (WRAC) Monthly Meeting**
May 2, 9 a.m.-4 p.m.
SFWMD B-1 Auditorium, 3310 Gun Club Road, West Palm Beach
- **SFWMD Governing Board Meeting**
May 12 & 13
Blake Library, Martin County
- **WRAC Issues Workshop - *River of Grass* Project Planning Phase II**
May 20, 10 a.m.-4 p.m.
John Boy Auditorium, 1200 South Owens Ave., Clewiston
- **WRAC Lake Okeechobee Committee Meeting**
May 26, 9 a.m.-4 p.m.
City of St. Cloud, Lakefront Park & Marina, 1104 Lakeshore Blvd., St. Cloud
- **WRAC Monthly Meeting**
June 3, 9 a.m.-4 p.m.
North Miami Leisure Services Dept., McDonald Center 17051 NE 19th Ave., North Miami Beach
- **SFWMD Governing Board Meeting**
June 8 & 9
SFWMD B-1 Auditorium, 3310 Gun Club Road, West Palm Beach
- **WRAC Issues Workshop - *River of Grass* Project Planning Phase II**
June 17, 10 a.m.-4 p.m.
SFWMD B-1 Auditorium, 3310 Gun Club Road, West Palm Beach
- **WRAC Recreation Issues Workshop**
June 21, 5 p.m.-8 p.m.
SFWMD B-1 Auditorium, 3310 Gun Club Road, West Palm Beach